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**Adults and Health Committee**

**Monday, 23 September 2024**

**Falls Prevention Strategy Update**

**Report of: Helen Charlesworth-May, Executive Director – Adults, Health and Integration**

**Report Reference No: AH/07/2024-25**

**Ward(s) Affected: All Wards**

### **Purpose of Report**

- 1 This report presents an overview of recent work stemming from the falls prevention strategy in Cheshire East. The strategy aims to reduce risk of falls amongst residents aged 65 and over, thus supporting people to live independently.

### **Executive Summary**

- 2 A significant number of older adults in Cheshire East experience falls annually, leading to hospitalisations and adverse health outcomes.
- 3 Falls are influenced by a range of factors, including medical conditions, and environmental hazards.
- 4 Work on the strategy is managed via a Cheshire East Falls Prevention Group. Actions have encompassed the recommission of One You Cheshire East, improved falls risk assessments, an annual falls awareness week and other communications actions.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Adult and Health Committee is recommended to:

1. Endorse continuing work on the strategy and action plan to help reduce falls amongst older people in Cheshire East.

## Background

- 5 Falls are an important public health concern in Cheshire East, with a significant number of older adults (aged 65+) experiencing fall related injuries annually. Approximately, 2,145 individuals in this age group were admitted to hospital as a result of falls in 2022/23 <sup>1</sup>. The prominence of this issue is only likely to rise due to the ageing population.
- 6 The consequences of falls can be severe, including fractures, pain, increased fear of falling, social isolation, frailty, and greater reliance on health and social care services (including residential care) <sup>2</sup>.
- 7 Falls are a complex challenge to address due to the multitude of factors which can lead someone to fall. These include visual impairment, medical conditions, use of multiple medications and age. It also encompasses many wider determinants of health such as the condition of housing, education (linked to health literacy) and social isolation.
- 8 The Cheshire East falls prevention group meets every 6-8 weeks to discuss the issue of falls. Representatives include those from Healthwatch, Mid-Cheshire Hospital Trust, East Cheshire Hospital Trust, One You Cheshire East, Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care Board and Cheshire East Council. Oversight and development of a falls action plan forms much of the work of the group.
- 9 A falls prevention strategy was developed by the group last year to address this challenge. This has the vision of, “preventing and reducing the impact of falls to enable people in Cheshire East to live independently for longer”. This is complemented by a series of aims which are: to identify those at risk of falling; help individuals at risk through the provision of evidence-based services and support; and to assist individuals who do fall to reduce the risk of this happening again.
- 10 Work has progressed in a number of different ways since the strategy was developed. This has included recommissioning the One You Cheshire East service which includes the provision of an evidence-based falls prevention programme to reduce the risk of falls. As part of this, programme capacity has been increased to a maximum of 960 places. These classes will be delivered in community settings across the Borough. Access by rural communities is also an area of particular focus. The new contract will commence in November 2024.

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<sup>1</sup> Public Health Outcomes Framework, Office for Health Improvement and Disparities

<sup>2</sup> Institute of Medicine (US) Division of Health Promotion and Disease Prevention; Berg RL, Cassells JS, editors, Washington (DC): National Academies Press (US); 1992., <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK235613/>

- 11 A new 'Steady on Your Feet' website is due to be launched in September which will provide specialist advice to residents over reducing falls risk. It will also include a section specifically for professionals to increase knowledge of and referrals to local services.
- 12 Work has taken place by two local falls leads based within the acute trusts, to improve local practice on risk assessments for falls. This has ensured that practice by clinical professionals accords with the latest evidence, increasing the likelihood of positive impact. Of additional note, is that training is due to take place by the leads in residential homes to reduce falls in this setting. This will supplement other work that has taken place including use of ICB funding to provide assistive technology devices to care homes to prevent falls.
- 13 Cheshire East is one of the few north-west places which regularly runs a falls awareness week. This year talks will take place in a number of settings such as extra care housing about active ageing and avoiding falls. A communications campaign will also be run for this, including a press release, social media message by the Council and partners and correspondence with local stakeholders.
- 14 The Council has previously produced a popular falls prevention booklet in conjunction with Cheshire West and Chester Council, which provides advice on falls and details of local services and is especially helpful to older residents without IT access. Work is underway to refresh this document and a new version will be produced once this work is completed.
- 15 Emergency hospital admissions from falls in those aged 65 and above have reduced in the last three years in Cheshire East. This is in line with the England average. The pandemic is also likely to have influenced the falls rate, for instance, due to reduced reporting of falls and diminished attendance at falls prevention classes, although the precise impacts are complex <sup>3</sup>.
- 16 Community equipment and assistive technology is also commissioned by the Council to reduce the risk of falls. Service development work continues to take place on these to enhance their preventative benefit whilst also ensuring value for money.
- 17 Having a measurable impact in the short term, across a whole population is challenging. This means that individual indicators can be the best way to understand progress. Examples include:

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<sup>3</sup> James Frith, Dawn A Skelton, The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on falls and fractures, 4 years on, are we any further forward?, *Age and Ageing*, Volume 53, Issue 6, June 2024, afae110, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ageing/afae110>

- Provision of OTAGO falls prevention classes under the One You Cheshire East service. 627 people attended these classes in the last 12 months, with around 80% achieving improved strength and balance. A sample of 90 participants were recently surveyed. This established that six months after completing the programme: 12% had experienced one fall; 13% two falls; 7% three or more falls. It is important to note that participants must meet eligibility criteria to access the programme which identifies that they have a high risk of falling in the future.
- 295 evidence-based risk assessments have also been conducted of residents in the Borough in the last twelve months including those presenting at A&E. Support encompassed medication, home hazards, community equipment as well as vision.
- 156 pledges were made by local residents during falls awareness week around actions they would take to reduce their falls risk. This resulted from a series of drop-in sessions run at medical practices across the Borough where a mini-risk assessment was conducted with relevant patients.
- Around 10,000 falls awareness leaflets have also been distributed over time to older people via partners.

## **Consultation and Engagement**

- 18 A number of measures were taken to develop the strategy. This included: surveys of local residents, discussion with residents at older people's/falls groups and co-production of the strategy contents at the Cheshire East falls prevention group. A briefing was also held with Members to inform the approach.
- 19 Partnership work on implementation of the strategy continues to take place at the Cheshire East falls prevention group which meets regularly.
- 20 Production of the falls element of the new One You Cheshire East service took place via a working group made up of a range of professionals. Engagement also took place over the approach via focus groups and 1-1 interviews with older people.

## **Reasons for Recommendations**

- 21 Falls are unfortunately relatively common amongst older people, with more than one in three of those aged 65+ sustaining a fall each year. Continued partnership work on falls prevention is the best way to successfully tackle this problem, given that the causes of falls are numerous and span primary and secondary healthcare and public health responsibilities.

## Other Options Considered

Option	Impact	Risk
Do nothing	The issue of falls will be tackled haphazardly	-That the prevalence of falls increases locally thus increasing pressure on social care and health service

## Implications and Comments

### *Monitoring Officer/Legal*

- 22 Having reviewed this report and noting the contents there are no matters or issues that from a legal perspective require to be drawn to the attention of the committee.

### *Section 151 Officer/Finance*

- 23 Any expenditure related to the falls strategy and action plan will take place within existing budgets, which have been previously agreed under the Medium-Term Financial Strategy.

### *Policy*

<b>An open and enabling organisation</b>	<b>A council which empowers and cares about people</b>	<b>A thriving and sustainable place</b>
Promote and develop the services of the council through regular communication and engagement with all residents	Reduce health inequalities across the borough	

### *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion*

- 24 An equality impact assessment was previously completed when the strategy was approved. Please see <https://modern.gov.cheshireeast.gov.uk/documents/s107863/Appendix%204%20-%20EIA.pdf>.

### *Human Resources*

25 None

### *Risk Management*

26 Standard risk management processes are followed when developing and implementing action plan items.

### *Rural Communities*

27 Rural communities are carefully considered for action plan items. For instance, this has included ensuring access to falls prevention classes for those without easy transport to major local towns.

### *Children and Young People including Cared for Children, care leavers and Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)*

28 None

### *Public Health*

- Strategy work takes preventative steps to reduce health need amongst the population as a whole, as well as to reduce health inequalities across the Borough via targeted implementation of the action plan.

### *Climate Change*

29 Relevant commissioned services have had their impact on the climate assessed via a social value tender question.

<b>Access to Information</b>	
Contact Officer:	Nik Darwin, Senior Commissioning Manager Nik.Darwin@cheshireeast.gov.uk
Appendices:	N/A
Background Papers:	Corporate Plan 2024-25, <a href="https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/pdf/council-and-democracy/corporate-plans/the-cheshire-east-council-plan-2024-25.pdf">https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/pdf/council-and-democracy/corporate-plans/the-cheshire-east-council-plan-2024-25.pdf</a> Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2023-28, <a href="https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/pdf/council-and-democracy/health-and-wellbeing-board/joint-health-wellbeing.pdf">https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/pdf/council-and-democracy/health-and-wellbeing-board/joint-health-wellbeing.pdf</a>

